Momotaro

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MOMOTARO

or

Little Peachling.

A long long time ago there lived an old man and an old woman. One day the old man went to the mountains to cut grass; and the old woman

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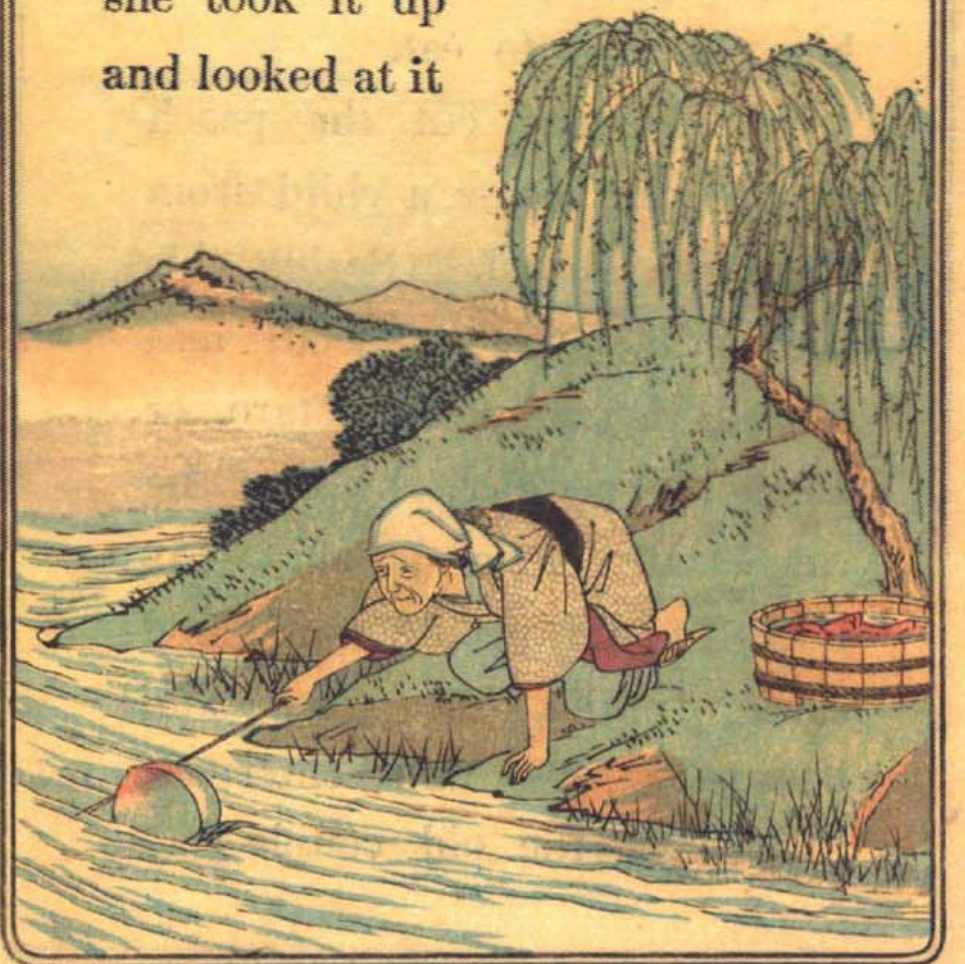
went to the river to wash clothes. While she was washing a great big thing came tumbling and splashing down the stream. When the old woman saw it

she was very glad, and pulled it to her with a piece of bamboo that lay near by. When she took it up and looked at it



she saw that it was a very large peach. She then quickly finished her washing and returned home intending to give the peach to her old man to eat.

When she cut the peach in two, out came a child from the large kernel. Seeing this the old couple rejoiced, and named the child Momotaro, or Little Peachling, because he came out of a peach. As both the old people took good care of him, he grew and became strong and enterprising. So the old couple had

their expectations raised, and bestowed still more care on his education.

Momotaro finding that he excelled every body in strength determined to cross over to the island of the devils, take their riches, and come back. He at once consulted with the old man and the old woman about the matter, and got them to make him some dumplings. These he put in his pouch. Besides this he made every kind of preparation for his journey to the island of the devils and set out.

Then first a dog came to the side of the way and said; "Momotaro! What have you there hanging at your belt?" He replied: "I have some of the very best Japanese millet dumplings." "Give me one and I will go with you," said the

dog. So Momotaro took a dumpling out of his pouch and gave it to the dog. Then a monkey came and got one the same way. A pheasant also came flying and said: "Give me a dumpling too, and I will go along with you." So all three went along with him. In no time they arrived at the island of the devils, and at once broke through the front gate; Momotaro first; then his three followers. Here they met a great multitude of the devil's retainers who showed fight, but

they pressed still inwards, and at last encountered the chief of the devils, called Akandoji. Then came the tug of war. Akandoji made at Momotaro with an iron club, but Momotaro was ready for him, and dodged him adroitly. At last they grappled each other, and without difficulty Momotaro just crushed down Akandoji and tied him with a rope so tight that he could not even move. All this was done in a fair fight.

After this Akandoji the chief of the devils said he would surrender all his riches. "Out

with your riches then;" said Momotaro laughing. Having collected and ranged in order a great pile of precious things, Momotaro took them, and set out for his home, rejoicing, as he marched bravely back, that, with the help of his three companions, to whom he attributed all his success, he had been able so easily to accomplish his end.

Great was the joy of the old man and the old woman when Momotaro came back. He feasted every body bountifully, told many stories of his

adventure, displayed his riches, and at last became a leading man, a man of influence, very rich and honorable; a man to be very much congratulated indeed!!